CHAPTER IV.

The idea of God declared, in way of answer to the first Atheistic argument The grand prejudice against the naturality of this idea, as essentially including unity or oneliness in it, from the Pagan Polytheism, removed. Proved that the intelligent Pagans generally acknowledged one supreme Deity. What then* Polytheism and idolatry was; with some account of Christianity.—1. The either stupid insensibility, or gross impudence of Atheists, in denying the word GOD to have any signification, or that there is any other idea answering to it besides the mere phantasm of the sound. The disease called by the philosopher a«-oxi0»«$ wJ VOUTOMU, the petiification (or dead insensibility) of the mind.—2. That the Atheists themselves must needs have an idea of God in their minds, or otherwise, when they deny his existence, they should deny the existence of nothing. And that they have also the same idea of him with Theists, they denying the very same thing which the others affirm. —3. A lemma, or preparatory proposition to the idea of God, that though some things be made or generated, yet it is not possible, that all things should be made, but something must of necessity exist of itself from eternity unmade, and be the cause of those other things that are made.—4. The two most opposite opinions, concerning that which was self-existent from eternity, or unmade, and the cause of all other things made: one, that it was nothing but senseless matter, the niost imperfect of all things; the other, that it was something most perfect, and therefore consciously intellectual. The assertors of this latter opinion, Theists in a strict and proper sense; of the former, Atheists. So that the idea of God in general is a perfect consciously understanding being (or mind) self-existent from eternity, and the cause of all other things.—5. Observed, that the Atheists, who deny a God, according to the true idea of him, do often abuse the word, calling senseless matter by that name, and meaning nothing else thereby but a first principle, or self-existent unmade thing. That, according to this notion of the word God, there can be no such thing as an Atheist, no man being~able to persuade himself, that all things sprung from nothing.—6. In order to the more punctual declaration of the Divine idea, the opinion of those taken notice of, who suppose two self-existent unmade principles, God and matter; and so God not to be the sole, but only the chief principle.—7, That these are but imperfect and mistaken Theists. Their idea of God declared, with its defectiveness. A latitude in Theism. None to be condemned for absolute Atheists,